

Church of Spode

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“The questions of a million years oppress us. Who am I? Why was I made? What is my purpose? What is the purpose of the universe? Shall I survive after death? Can I be happy? Scientists can only tell us about forces and matter. Philosophers chase each other in circles. None of them can really answer the questions that we really care about. Only Spode has the answers. Follow the Law of Spode, and all shall be clear.”

— *Extract from the Scrolls of Faith*



The **Church of Spode**, sometimes known as the **Cult of Spode**, **Holy Temple of Spode** or simply as the **Spodist Faith**, is a monotheistic religion followed by countless alien species scattered throughout the universe based on the teachings and traditions of the sacred texts known as the "Scrolls of Faith", which serves as foundation for the religion. The focal points of the Cult of Spode are the belief in and worship of Spode as divine creator and master of all creation, the power of Spode to intercede in matters spiritual and temporal, the power of prayer to bring about a change in circumstances, and the divine right of the followers of the church to rule the universe. Though any spodist cult or sect of any civilization and alien race must ultimately adhere to the core theology of the Scrolls of Faith, the possibility for conflicting interpretation means that in practice the Cult of Spode is an agglomeration of many differing schools of thought. Whilst agreeing in essence, cults and sects across the universe often differ on particular tenets of belief or modes of worship. To many Spode is a god of war, to others a savior and bringer of light and spiritual enlightenment, and to

some a stern judge of the dead. Inevitably, simple differences of emphasis of faith can become points of hostility and even the cause of bloodshed. Many merciless and savage wars have resulted time and again over such fine points of theological doctrine. Although the interpretation of particular dogmas of the Scrolls of Faith varies across the many civilizations of the universe, any extreme deviance from its strictures and theology is considered heresy and dealt with great severity by all the true believers.

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Scrolls of Faith

*"I'm the Sacred Scrolls, the word of truth.
I was created by the Might divine,
the highest Wisdom and the primal Love.
Before me there was naught created, save
eternal things, and I eternal last."*

— Prologue to the Scrolls of Faith

The Scrolls of Faith are a collection of sacred texts and scriptures that the spodists consider to be a product of divine inspiration and a record of the relationship between Spode and his followers. All the records listed on the scrolls act as the body of doctrines and articles of faith which are preached across the universe. It is the word of Spode as related by his saints, and it forms the core of belief shared by every worshipper across the length and breadth of Spode's domains regardless of the form of worship practiced on the world of their birth.



In practice, the Scrolls of Faith operates on several levels. The scripture scholars debate endlessly the minutiae of the words of the scrolls and the saints (which sometimes prove to be subtly contradictory). Arguments about the exact meaning of a particular phrase might rage for decades, even centuries, causing bitter schisms amongst the various factions as people decry one another as benighted fools, dangerous reformers, or even heretics. Indeed, there have been many occasions when outright violence has erupted between factions holding opposing views on such interpretations, and in the most extreme of cases the ecclesiastical leaders of neighboring territories have mustered vast armies from the ranks of their congregations and made war upon their erstwhile brothers in faith. Every day, many ecclesiastical institutions in many different alien civilizations disseminate reams of pronouncements and clarifications, of learned texts and annotations of existing ones. The priests are expected to preach such tracts to those below them, thus propagating the true word to their congregations. In practice, no one can be conversant in such a vast body of doctrine, and huge armies of scholars and savants are employed by their theocratic nations to identify the relevant passages and to file the remainder away in their vast archive-shrines of the religious teachings.

The second level on which the teachings of the Scrolls of Faith operate is at the opposite end of the scale, in the soul of every living being. The universe is a big, cruel place, indifferent to the misfortunes of the people. The mere need to survive is a huge burden for the vast majority of people and forces them to live often in a state of poverty, unending toil and oppression, where the only alternative to a life of abject servitude to someone more powerful than them is to be shipped out to a faraway war to be slain at the hands of some bloodthirsty alien monstrosity. For many, the act of worship is the only brief respite they have from the brutal reality of day-to-day life, an opportunity to escape the cruelty of their overseers before returning once more to their bitter labors.

Instead other people, whose fate has been more benevolent and have been lucky enough to live a comfortable life, find in their faith a way to further enrich their soul and mind. Every step of the Scrolls of Faith read by them is a further step towards the highest peaks of spiritual and moral enlightenment. They try to use the teachings learned from the sacred texts to improve themselves and project towards the nonbelievers an aura of enlightenment, altruism and idealism, so that the other races can better accept the supremacy of Spode over them.

Nevertheless, reverence for Spode as the creator of the universe is the one thing

shared by all his followers across all creation, regardless of their social background and morality. A person might be the very worst kind of scum, a rebel, a pirate or a slaver of flesh, rejecting all the laws of their mother nation, yet still he will hold true to Spode.

Tenets of Faith

“There is no god but Spode.

There is no labour unendurable for the glory of Spode.

There is no sacrifice too great for the majesty of Spode.

There is no fear unassailable with faith in Spode.

There is no object that cannot be given up for Spode.

There is no word other than the Word of Spode.

There is no end. There is a place for us all in Spode's great scheme of things.”

— *Extract from the Scrolls of Faith*

Cultures and religious rituals related to the Spodist faith change depending on the civilization and alien species that practice them. As such, practices adhered to on one world may be held as abhorrent on another. This vast and diverse range of practices and beliefs are generally tolerated by most followers of the Spodist church, as it would be impossible to maintain a complete standardization of the faith in the countless planets and populations who worship Spode. However, the Scrolls of Faith contain several basic key tenets that can not in any way ignored or altered:

- Spode is the one true god, and no others may be worshipped alongside him.
- Every living being has a place within Spode's divine order.
- It is the duty of the faithful to purge the heretic, beware the infidel and abhor the other faiths.
- It is the duty of the faithful to spread the Spodist faith in the whole universe, by sword or by word.
- It is the duty of the faithful to unquestionably obey the authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, who speak in Spode's name.
- All the unbelievers who have not yet been converted or destroyed must pay a tax to the believers. If the requirements are not met, the believers have the moral duty of declaring war to them.
- The Grox are blasphemy in machine form. Their destruction is a top priority for every true believer.

- "The False God That Will Come", also known as "The Great Enemy" and "Anathema" is Spode's worst enemy, the epitome of all that is wrong and blasphemous in the universe. Worshiping him is an unforgivable sin.

Another recurring theme is the notion of the "Time of the End", when all creation will cease to exist and the present age will end with the ultimate victory of good over evil. Often tied to the notion of the Time of the End is a belief that Spode will descend from the heavens to deliver the faithful from the evils of the universe. While most view these as a time of deliverance, it is also believed that Spode will sit in judgment of all mortals, casting those lacking in faith into damnation. Aside from these central tenets, there exists a massive body of official and unofficial dogmas which varies from region to region and is the subject of constant debate. The subject of the afterlife is a regularly debated topic, with many teachings mentioning the form of an afterlife in which the faithful take their rightful place beside Spode for eternity and the infidel is cast into a black pit to suffer by the hand of an evil entity known as "The False God That Will Come".

Saints

The word "saint" is a term used for a person who is recognized as having an exceptional degree of holiness or likeness to Spode and that should be seen by true believers as role models. They are exceptionally holy individuals, and their words and deeds are held to be the direct work of Spode himself. Throughout the millions of years since the birth of the church of Spode, billions of people have been recognized as saints, in many cases long after their death and only after decades of consideration. Most are known and venerated only within a specific nation or region of space, but some, such as the anonymous writers of the Scrolls of Faith, are known across the length and breadth of Spode's mortal domains. Anyone might be declared saint, but in most cases they have to perform some great deed in service to Spode and his followers to be declared as such. All the saints across various cultures and civilizations who follow the teachings of Spode have the following family resemblances:

- exemplary model
- defender of the faith
- extraordinary teacher
- wonder worker or source of benevolent power

- intercessor
- a life often refusing material attachments or comforts
- possession of a special and revelatory relation to the holy.

In a universe riven by war and plagued by all sorts of enemies of the faith, it should be little surprise that many saints were great warriors, often the leaders of massive military campaigns that conquered vast swathes of space in the name of Spode or liberated worlds enslaved by heretics, unbelievers and apostates. Many were generals or admirals, while others were simple foot soldiers who by doing their duty turned the tide of battle and changed history. Other saints were great teachers, prophets or orators, people who with a single word or missive could achieve what a million soldiers could not. The writers of the most learned of religious tracts are often made saints, lending even greater weight to teachings preached across countless planets. Many saints are regarded as intercessors, to whom prayers are addressed and offerings made that they might aid the faithful in some manner. It is held that the saint, being mortal but also close to the Almighty, might be able to petition Spode and bring about some tangible effect. Many saints come to be regarded as able to intercede on specific issues, such as to provide deliverance from heretics, safe passage across space, a successful crop or a warrior's true aim. Furthermore, it is common practice for the highest ecclesiastical leaders of all nations and organizations who embrace the Spodist faith to be declared saints after their deaths, although the 'beatification' of less well-respected or beloved individuals may take decades or even centuries to come about.

A Life of Worship

Spode has a profound effect on the lives of the people who worship him. To most, He is everywhere and everything. Part of every citizen's life is to honor Him, often on a daily basis, for the protection and guidance that He provides. How they honor Him, however, will of course vary depending on where they live and just how they choose to view Spode. Whatever the world's particular teachings, almost universally, the followers of Spode pray before work, before meals and before downtime. They thank Spode for what they have and pray to Him for what they desire. They often believe wholeheartedly that if they do not pray to Spode and follow the instructions of His clerics, they risk their very souls. Over time, citizens of spodist theocratic nations become entwined in the rituals of worship, so that daily prayers to Spode are as natural to them as breathing.

For most, this is as far as they come in their religious observance, convinced of their faith, living and dying without ever questioning the clerical orders or the god they serve.

Relationship with non-followers

Few facts have become more evident in many people's lifetime than the fact that we all live in a big and extremely diverse universe. With the rapid increase in the transmission of information and the ability to travel through space on a multi-galactic scale has also come an increasing awareness that the universe contains a multitude of diverse and conflicting viewpoints on many different issues.

Nowhere is this diversity more evident than in the realm of religion, where every faith is tailored to every single alien species, and their various peoples, differentiated by each other from the conditions of the environments in which they live and how they approach them.

In view of the above, many spodists have wondered what should their attitude be toward non-Spodist religions and toward those who embrace them? Among those who are seeking to respond to this question, three distinct answers can be heard today.

Some say that the followers of Spode should believe in religious freedom and acknowledge that all religions are equally (or nearly equally) valid as ways to approach the Divine. Though there may be superficial differences among the Universe's religions, at heart they are fundamentally the same. Often the analogy is used of people taking different paths up the same mountain, but all arriving at the same summit. They also preach that members of other religions should be respected and have the freedom to practice their religion without any restriction. This is the viewpoint known as **Religious Pluralism**, and its supporters believe this in general because they do not believe that the Scrolls of Faith are the literal word of Spode, they see members of other faiths living good and holy lives and they believe Spode is a force (like gravity) and can be found in different ways.

Others, more anxious to preserve some sense of uniqueness for the Spodist faith, yet equally desirous of projecting an attitude of tolerance and acceptance, are committed to the viewpoint known as **Spodist Inclusivism**. In their opinion, though people of another religious conviction may be ignorant of Spode--or possibly even have rejected Him--yet because of their positive response to what they know about the Divine, or even due to their efforts to follow the dictates of

their conscience, they are unknowingly included in the number of those who are recipients of Spode's salvation. The analogy is sometimes used of a person who receives a gift, but is unaware of who the ultimate giver of the gift may be.

A third viewpoint is known as **Spodist Exclusivism**. This is the viewpoint traditionally held by the majority of the followers of Spode. It is the view that though there are indeed truths and values in many other religions, there is only one saving truth, namely the Scrolls of Faith, the sacred text of the Spodist religion. This view is most naturally deduced from the Scrolls' well known statement: "Only Spode has the answers. Follow the Law of Spode, and all shall be clear". Supporters of Spodist Exclusivism also think that since only the Spodist faith is the only "full truth", Spodists have the sacred right to convert everyone to their faith. Very often the staunchest followers of the way of Spodist Exclusivism are violent zealots that believe fiercely in the spodist core tenets that encourage to purge the heretic, beware the infidel, abhor the other faiths and spread the Spodist faith in the whole universe by word or by sword.

It is of great importance also to discuss the attitude that non-followers use towards Spodists, which changes significantly from one civilization to the other.

Some alien civilizations prove to be very tolerant of those who worship Spode, but almost always this is allowed only when there is a state of mutual tolerance between spodists and non-spodists -- indeed, no nation can allow dangerous zealots to live among their law-abiding citizens and risking to cause internecine wars within their borders. In these civilizations there may not be a local state religion and rather support the principle of freedom of religion (freedom to profess theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs, as well as the right not to profess any religion or belief), or there may actually be a state religion, but government also permits religious practices of other sects besides the state religion, and does not persecute believers in other faiths.

Other civilizations, more tied to their own religion or that have no high opinion about who practices religious beliefs (which can be seen as absurd superstitions), tend to put several restrictions on the practice of spodism (e.g. bans on proselytizing or conversion, or restrictions on the building of places of worship). It is possible that Spodist citizens are treated by these civilizations as second-class citizens with very limited rights and little to no representation in the government.

Finally, there are civilizations in the universe that are openly hostile to Spodism

(or religion in general), ready to persecute and destroy anyone who is defined as a Spodist. Religious persecution against the Spodists may be triggered by religious bigotry (i.e. members of a dominant group denigrating religions other than their own) or by a state when it views a spodist group as a threat to its interests or security.

Summary

Zealots are not good. they are people who kill other races for not following Spode. we should not support them.

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Gallery



Most common depiction of the Eye of Spode in the Omfalos Galaxy



Most common depiction of the Eye of Spode in the Andromeda Galaxy



Most common depiction of the Eye of Spode in the Bunsen Galaxy



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